

Claims

1. A method of providing an incentive for continued use of a slot machine, the method comprising the steps of:
  - providing a ticket dispenser integrally coupled with the slot machine;
  - monitoring output signals of the slot machine;
  - determining the occurrence of predetermined reward dispensing events based on the results of said monitoring step; and
  - dispensing tickets by the ticket dispenser upon the occurrence of the predetermined reward dispensing events.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein, in the monitoring step, the output signals include at least one of the following:
  - Coin-In signals indicating a number of coins inserted into the slot machine;
  - Coin-Bet signals indicating a number of coins bet in the slot machine;
  - Coin-Won signals indicating a number of coins won from using the slot machine; and
  - Card-In signals indicating a presence of a player tracking card in the slot machine.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein, in the providing step, the ticket dispenser is programmable by an operator such that the predetermined reward dispensing events can be modified.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein, in the providing step, the ticket dispenser is



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programmable using a plurality of switches and a display unit incorporated with the ticket dispenser.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein, in the determining step, the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

- a first event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value;

- a second event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value;

- a third event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value; and

- a fourth event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generate by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the dispensing step includes:

- detecting whether a player tracking card is present in the slot machine based on the output signals of the slot machine;



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multiplying a predetermined number of tickets to be dispensed by a first number if the player tracking card is present;

multiplying the predetermined number of tickets to be dispensed by a second number if the player tracking card is not present; and

dispensing the tickets according to the results of said multiplying steps.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

displaying the first four digits of a total ticket count in response to a first selection of a designated switch in the ticket dispenser, the total ticket count being a count of the number of tickets dispensed by the ticket dispenser; and

displaying the second four digits of the total ticket count in response to a second selection of the designated switch after the first selection.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein, in the determining step, the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

one event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value; and

another event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined



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maximum count value and a random number currently generate by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.

9. A ticket dispenser capable of being integrally coupled with a slot machine, for providing rewards to users of the slot machine, the ticket dispenser comprising:

an interface configured for receiving predetermined output signals from the slot machine, determining the occurrence of predetermined reward dispensing events based on the output signals, and generating control signals based on this determination results; and  
a ticket dispensing unit for dispensing tickets responsive to the control signals.

10. The ticket dispenser of claim 9, wherein the predetermined output signals include at least one of the following:

Coin-In signals indicating a number of coins inserted into the slot machine;

Coin-Bet signals indicating a number of coins bet in the slot machine;

Coin-Won signals indicating a number of coins won from using the slot machine; and

Card-In signals indicating a presence of a player tracking card in the slot machine.

11. The ticket dispenser of claim 9, wherein the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

a first event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value;

a second event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in



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the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value;

a third event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value; and

a fourth event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.

12. The ticket dispenser of claim 9, wherein the interface includes:

a display unit;

a display interface unit for controlling the display unit;

a central processing unit (CPU), including memory, for controlling the display interface unit and the ticket dispensing unit based on the output signals of the slot machine;

a plurality of switches for communicating operator inputs to the CPU; and

a relay for providing power to the ticket dispensing unit under control of the CPU.

13. The ticket dispenser of claim 12, wherein the interface is programmable using the plurality of switches, whereby the predetermined reward dispensing events can be modified.

14. The ticket dispenser of claim 12, wherein the interface determines whether a player



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tracking card is present in the slot machine based on the output signals of the slot machine, multiplies a predetermined number of tickets to be dispensed by a first number if the player tracking card is present, multiplies the predetermined number of tickets to be dispensed by a second number if the player tracking card is not present, and controls the ticket dispensing unit to dispense tickets according to the multiplication results.

15. The ticket dispenser of claim 12, wherein the display unit displays first four digits of a total ticket count in response to a first selection of a designated one switch of the plurality of switches, and displays second four digits of the total ticket count in response to a second selection of the designated switch after the first selection, the total ticket count being a count of the number of tickets dispensed by the ticket dispensing unit.

16. The ticket dispenser of claim 9, wherein the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

one event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value; and

another event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined



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maximum count value and a random number currently generate by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.

17. A gaming system comprising:

a slot machine for generating predetermined output signals indicative of certain conditions; and

a ticket dispenser, operatively coupled with the slot machine, for receiving the output signals from the slot machine and dispensing tickets as rewards based on the output signals when predetermined reward dispensing events occur.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the predetermined output signals include at least one of the following:

Coin-In signals indicating a number of coins inserted into the slot machine;

Coin-Bet signals indicating a number of coins bet in the slot machine;

Coin-Won signals indicating a number of coins won from using the slot machine; and

Card-In signals indicating a presence of a player tracking card in the slot machine.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

a first event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value;

a second event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in



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the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value;

a third event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value; and

a fourth event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generate by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.

the interface includes:

20. The system of claim 17, wherein the ticket dispenser comprises:

an interface configured for receiving the output signals from the slot machine, determining the occurrence of the predetermined reward dispensing events based on the output signals, and generating control signals based on this determination results; and

a ticket dispensing unit for dispensing tickets responsive to the control signals.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the interface of the ticket dispenser includes:

a display unit;

a display interface unit for controlling the display unit;

a central processing unit (CPU), including memory, for controlling the display interface unit and the ticket dispensing unit based on the output signals of the slot machine;



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a plurality of switches for communicating operator inputs to the CPU; and  
a relay for providing power to the ticket dispensing unit under control of the CPU.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the interface determines whether or not a player tracking card is present in the slot machine based on the output signals of the slot machine, multiplies a predetermined number of tickets to be dispense by a first number if the player tracking card is present, multiplies the predetermined number of tickets to be dispensed by a second number if the player tracking card is not present, and controls the ticket dispensing unit to dispense tickets according to the multiplication results.

23. The system of claim 21, wherein the display unit displays first four digits of a total ticket count in response to a first selection of a designated one of the plurality of switches, and displays second four digits of the total ticket count in response to a second selection of the designated switch after the first selection, the total ticket count is a count of the number of tickets dispensed by the ticket dispensing unit.

24. The system of claim 17, wherein the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

one event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value; and



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another event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generate by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.

25. Computer program product embodied on computer readable media readable by a computer device of a ticket dispenser integrally coupled with a slot machine, for providing an incentive for continued use of the slot machine, the product comprising:

first computer-readable program code means for monitoring predetermined output signals of the slot machine, and determining the occurrence of predetermined reward dispensing events based on the outputs signals; and

second computer-readable program code means for controlling dispensing of tickets from the ticket dispenser upon the occurrence of the predetermined reward dispensing events.

26. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the output signals include at least one of the following:

Coin-In signals indicating a number of coins inserted into the slot machine;

Coin-Bet signals indicating a number of coins bet in the slot machine;

Coin-Won signals indicating a number of coins won from using the slot machine; and

Card-In signals indicating a presence of a player tracking card in the slot machine.



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27. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

a first event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value;

a second event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value;

a third event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined count value; and

a fourth event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generate by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.

28. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the first computer-readable program code means determines whether a player tracking card is present in the slot machine based on the output signals of the slot machine, multiplies a predetermined number of tickets to be dispense by a first number if the player tracking card is present, and multiplies the predetermined number of tickets to be dispensed by a second number if the player tracking card is not present, and wherein the second computer-readable program code means generates



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control signals to a ticket dispensing unit to dispense the tickets according to the multiplication results.

29. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the first computer-readable program code means controls a display unit to display first four digits of a total ticket count in response to a first selection of a designated switch in the ticket dispenser and to display second four digits of the total ticket count in response to a second selection of the designated switch after the first selection, the total ticket count being a count of the number of tickets dispensed by the ticket dispenser.

30. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the predetermined reward dispensing events include at least one of the following:

one event wherein the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins inserted or bet in the slot machine is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generated by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value; and

another event wherein the total number of coins won from using the slot machine reaches a predetermined maximum count value, or the total number of coins won is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum count value but less than the predetermined maximum count value and a random number currently generate by the ticket dispenser equals a predetermined comparison value.